

30 July 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with [REDACTED]

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At Admiral Inman's suggestion, I talked on a deep-background basis with [REDACTED] of Public Affairs was also present for most of the interview).

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Most of the discussion was about the type of analysis done in the Intelligence Community, the structure of the analytic parts of the Community, the quality of products and their usefulness to policymakers. I presented him a tutorial on the subject of the structure of the analytic parts of the Community, since he seemed rather ignorant on this subject.

He also asked about such matters as changes over time in estimates on Soviet oil production, the aftermath of the Team A/Team B episode, and a recent unclassified publication on terrorism. On these topics, we mostly covered the importance of bringing alternative points of view to bear on complex questions, the fact that views could change on the basis of new information, and how judgments could be very difficult to make and that errors are certainly possible in estimates, especially on matters involving political behavior.

He raised the question of politicization of estimates. In response, I emphasized the difficulty of doing many types of estimates and the possibility of falling into error. As an example I reviewed with him the long history of estimates on Soviet strategic forces during the 1960's and early 1970's (much of which had been made public). This experience showed the value of bringing to bear alternative points of view in the process of developing estimates. The Team A/Team B episode had in fact led to the institutionalizing of different points of view by involving outside consultants during the process of making the estimate rather than engaging in an adversary procedure.

He also expressed interest in how dissenting views were recorded in estimates. I explained that they were included in the text with appropriate footnotes. In this connection, I pointed out that the system sometimes resulted in the CIA Director's being in a minority of one. He responded with an expression of astonishment.

At the end, he commented on the recent terrorism publication as being, in his judgment, of poor analytical quality. We discussed that publication briefly. Points covered were the fact that some information was excluded from the public document because of classification, but in fact, this was not regarded as a product of highest quality by people in the Community. He should understand that from time to time the Director might have problems with analyses because they were not good enough, and this is not a matter of changing estimates on political grounds.

Harry S. Rowen